

Celebrate Kenai National Wildlife Refuge's 75th Birthday through a Very Special Event!

by Amber Kraxberger-Linson and Candace Ward



Jim Pfitzer re-enacts the life of conservationist, Aldo Leopold, in a free one act play A Standard of Change, Friday evening, October 8, at the Kenai Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center. (Photo from Jim Pfitzer's website).

Celebrate Kenai National Wildlife Refuge's 75th Birthday year with a grand opening art show event on Saturday evening, October 8, from 6 – 8 PM, at the Kenai Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center in Kenai, Alaska. This is a free event for the public and features spectacular photographic artwork and fascinating historical artifacts along with a guest artist entertainment presentation.

Tom Collopy and Mary Frische of Wild North Photography based in Homer, Alaska, spent over 4 years traveling the Refuge in all seasons capturing amazing photos of scenic vistas, wildlife, and visitors having fun. Using the power of photography, Mary and Tom work to create transcendent images that inspire viewers to appreciate the Refuge with a sense of awe and wonder. They work in a unique style done through printing photographic images on

stretched canvas then applying clear varnish brush strokes which give each image a painting-like quality that is exceptionally beautiful.

Other photographers who kindly provided images of the Refuge for the photographic art exhibit include Berkley Bedell, Karen & Kennan Ward, Michael Bernard, and the *Peninsula Clarion*.

To lend a sense of history to the event, Refuge staff led by Amber Kraxberger-Linson, Daniel Saxton, and Leah Eskelin rounded up Refuge artifacts from the last 75 years to display with the photographic art work. These items range from a hand carved rolling pin found at an historic Refuge cabin to original signs from the Kenai Moose Range era of 1941–1979. These items give a texture and dimensionality to the exhibit and connect people over time with the Refuge.

The reception includes delicious appetizer refresh-

ments sponsored by the National Wildlife Refuge Association. Each family attending the event also receives a free commemorative poster done in a colorful retro style of the 1940's illustrating a bull moose in water with a scenic mountain backdrop.



View the photographic art of Tom Collopy & Mary Frische's adventures on Kenai NWR at the Kenai Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center from October 8 - November 20. (Photo by Tom Collopy)

In addition, there will be a unique entertainment event. Guest artist, Jim Pfitzer, will portray conser-

vationist Aldo Leopold in the one-man one-act play *A Standard of Change*. The play takes place during one evening in the famous Wisconsin shack where Leopold was inspired to write his influential book, *A Sand County Almanac*.

Published after his death in 1949, *A Sand County Almanac*, captured Aldo Leopold's life-time of natural history observation and wildlife management philosophy. Leopold was a professional member of the Boone and Crockett Club, the Co-Founder of The Wilderness Society, and a Professor of Game Management at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He believed that we can be only ethical to the land "in relation to something we can see, feel, understand, love, or otherwise have faith in."

For those who appreciate and love the land and wild community that is Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, please join us for a wonderful evening celebrating our Refuge as a very special place for the last 75 years in all of our lives.

Amber Kraxberger-Linson and Candace Ward are park rangers in the Visitor Services Program at Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. For more information, please contact the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center at 907-262-2820, Tuesday through Saturday from 10 AM – 5 PM or check out the Refuge website at <http://www.fws.gov/refuge/kenai/>.